

here and share the work that is being done by the people on the ground fighting every day to make a difference in the lives of the students in their communities.

The Alliance brings together educators, school administrators, private business, and the local Chamber of Commerce, a cohesive group of diverse organizations, to make real progress toward improving the workforce pipeline in Berks County. Their goal is to have 18 school districts in Berks County adopt their framework and eventually make it a statewide initiative.

This initiative is being led by Dr. Jill Hackman, the executive director of the Berks County Intermediate Unit, and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. Thanks to their tireless efforts, and the efforts of many others involved, students will be exposed to new learning opportunities that can open the door to family sustaining careers.

I am very proud of the work being done in my district, and I look forward to seeing their initiative change the lives of some of the 70,000 K–12 students in Berks County.

THE TAX CUT IS A DEBACLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand the vote tally for the “Tax No Jobs” bill. It is interesting, when you are asked about the tax bill, they put the word “jobs.”

This was a very close vote, and 12 Republicans understood this was the worst vote, worst bill in the history of the United States; and the reason is, of course, because tens of millions of middle class households and those who need a tax break will not get it. \$1.7 trillion in debt.

It eliminates tax benefits that directly impact the middle class, it results in 13 million fewer Americans with health insurance, it adds over \$2 trillion in deficit spending, and it triggers PAYGO’s automatic spending cuts to mandatory programs.

So let me tell you, my voice is a little rough, but my heart is strong. Social Security to the American people, it is going to be cut. Medicare, it is going to be cut. The Medicaid, for those in nursing homes like my friend who I visited over the weekend, will be cut.

And you know what? There will be no answer in jobs of corporations who got low tax rates, lower than you.

This is a debacle so bad that it has to come back and we have to vote again for it.

My voice is a little rough, but I am going out there to tell the American people that this is the worst calamity since we collapsed under the past Republican administration. Vote “no” every time you see this bill because it is “no” for the American people.

□ 1715

IN MEMORY OF AGNES DOSTER

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Mrs. Agnes Doster, who passed away on Monday, December 4, at the age of 79.

Originally from Forsyth, Georgia, Mrs. Doster worked for 40 years in the Secretary of the Senate’s office in the Georgia State Capitol. She served in a number of different capacities there with dedication since 1968, always making the Georgia State Capitol run more efficiently, while promoting good government.

Outside of her time working as a civil servant, Mrs. Doster was very active in the First Baptist Church of Snellville for over 45 years. There, she sang in the choir, played hand bells, directed weddings, and taught the 2-year-old Sunday school class.

She is survived by family all over the State of Georgia, including her husband, sister, children, grandchildren, and 30 nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Doster’s bright spirit will surely be missed by everyone around the Georgia State Capitol.

WHAT A DISASTER

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, what a disaster. The American people wanted a Tax Code that works for them. Instead, my esteemed colleagues just passed a tax plan that only works for crony capitalists and oligarchs.

The GOP tax plan is scamming hardworking American families in order to line the pockets of millionaire real estate developers and people who paint their toilet fixtures in their private jets gold.

Mr. Speaker, hardworking American taxpayers want jobs, investments in our highways and railroads, fully funded children’s healthcare, state-of-the-art schools, and well-paid teachers.

Oligarchs who own gilded skyscrapers, gold-leafed golf courses, and real estate passthroughs want to drown in the excesses of wealth.

The American people wrote their Representatives. They called us. They marched in the Halls of the Capitol for a democratic Tax Code. Instead, they got a scam that takes away money from schools, police officers, fire departments, and families. But I guess money talks.

THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 1 IS THE FIRST STEP

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, the passage of today’s bill is the first step to providing desperately needed once-in-a-generation relief from the failed status quo, especially in New York State.

Under this bill, the typical American family making \$73,000 a year will see a tax cut of \$2,059, and low- and middle-income New Yorkers can finally see an immediate raise in their January and February paychecks.

As a single working mom and a person who cared for my elderly and aging parents, I and my New York colleagues fought an uphill battle to include provisions facing elimination that are vital to seniors, single parents, struggling families, and overburdened job creators, many of whom have left New York State in vast numbers.

Despite the fact that these provisions faced the very real threat of elimination, our efforts were successful in securing the historic tax credit for a State like New York, with many of our Nation’s most historic and most important national landmarks, expanding the SALT deduction—the State and local tax deduction—childcare and dependent care credits, and continuing the deductibility of medical expenses, to assist our most vulnerable seniors in defraying high medical costs.

In New York’s 22nd District, 99 percent of itemizers deduct less than \$10,000 in property tax, the cap which represents the new deduction.

Due to Albany’s mismanagement, all the counties I represent are in the top 36 highest property tax rates compared with home value nationwide. This bill will provide relief on the Federal level, while, finally, finally, incentivizing Albany to respect taxpayers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana). The gentlewoman is no longer recognized.

Members are reminded to heed the gavel.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED TAX REFORM

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the American people need and want real tax reform, but rather than passing a strong, inclusive bipartisan bill focused on helping hardworking middle class families, today Republicans passed a bill filled with massive corporate giveaways and loopholes for the ultrawealthy.

For example, the top 1 percent in our country will receive over 82 percent of the entire tax benefit in the bill they passed today.

As long as Congress continues to pass legislation for partisan political reasons that seriously serve special corporate interests instead of the families that are struggling just to get by every day, where lobbyists have more input in the writing of this legislation than many Members of Congress, the American people lose.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this legislation today. It is a disappointment and a huge lost opportunity to actually help so many struggling families all across the country.

WE NEED TO RESTART PUERTO RICO'S ECONOMY

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico's economy is the most vital aspect in bringing back some sense of normalcy to the lives of 3.4 million American citizens on the island after the devastating impact of both Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Puerto Rico's economy had already been in a decline prior to these unprecedented natural disasters, due mostly to the island's outdated and discriminatory territorial status.

Tax reform presented this Congress with the historic opportunity to, even if only partially, fix these longstanding inequities by granting Puerto Rico equal treatment to that of the 50 States.

While we are grateful for the extension of federally qualified opportunity zones in this bill to the island, I believe that there is broad recognition on both sides of the aisle that more needs to be done in the future.

Congress must live up to its responsibility and act decisively to end years of improvisation by implementing sustainable pro-growth economic policies that are based upon the bedrock principles of citizen equality and political empower, and my constituents deserve no less.

AMTRAK CASCADES 501

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. Yesterday, my home State and my home district suffered a great tragedy. Amtrak Cascades 501, traveling from Seattle to Portland, Oregon, carrying 80 passengers and seven crewmembers, derailed near Olympia, Washington.

Early reports are that at least three passengers have died and nearly 100 people needed hospital care. My heart and prayers go out to all those families as they deal with this tragedy.

Our office stands ready to help any constituents in any way that we can. For up-to-date information, friends and family on Amtrak Cascades 501 can also call 1-800-523-9101.

I also want to thank our first responders for their skill and their courage. This could have been far worse without them.

But as Amtrak, the National Transportation Safety Board, and State and local officials help on the scene, there

are still so many questions, like: Why was the train going 50 miles over the speed limit as it rounded the curve? Why was the train not using positive train control technology to slow the train down? How, Mr. Speaker, can we be sure that this never happens again?

Mr. Speaker, I will do everything I can to ensure that the investigation and our affected families have the resources and the support necessary to get the facts in the coming days and months.

HONORING RILETTA CREAM

(Mr. NORCROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special woman, Mrs. Riletta Cream, from Camden County, but was known not only from the city she was born in, but the entire State of New Jersey. She passed away, unfortunately, yesterday.

Mrs. Cream was a kind, gentle, and loving woman, but had special character, strength, and conviction.

She was known as an institution for education and public service. She was a friend, a mentor, an educator, and a dear, dear friend to so many of those children who went to her school.

She was a Camden city native, and was a principal of Camden City High School for over a decade. She served as a role model for students, teachers, and administrators. After retiring, she didn't give up. She then ran as a freeholder, and was elected time after time, continuing to serve the community.

She led projects at the time called Tech 2000 to make sure there was a computer in every child's classroom and at their desk. She fought for libraries when funding was short. She knew the value of education, whether it was going to college or to a trade school.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in mourning the loss of this shining light in my hometown. Mrs. Cream accomplished so much and gave so many years of service. May she rest in peace.

IN HONOR OF LILLIE BIGGINS

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my neighbor in east Fort Worth and my friend, Lillie Biggins, who will soon be retiring from the Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital after 45 years of service.

Lillie joined the Texas Health Fort Worth family back in 1997, serving as vice president of operations. Her role was critical in overseeing major departments, such as emergency services, trauma services, and restorative services.

During her tenure, she helped cultivate a vision of success for the Texas Health Fort Worth community. Not

only did Lillie dedicate her time in the health community, but she also volunteers all around the city of Fort Worth. Lillie often mentors and helps others in the area of health, education, youth, senior citizen services, businesses, and so many areas in our city that are underserved.

For her dedicated service to the community, she has been awarded so many awards, including her induction into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Lillie all the best as she moves on into her relaxing retirement, but I know that she probably won't be that relaxed and that she is going to be very active in the community. I wish her the best in the future.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX SCAM

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what do Iran, Ebenezer Scrooge, and the Republican tax scam have in common?

Well, they are all ruthless, cutthroat, coldblooded, heartless, and stingy.

That is why I voted "no" on the Republican tax scam, and if I could have added an H to the no, I would have.

This legislation gives 83 percent of the tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent, while raising taxes on 86 million middle-income families.

The numbers prove that this is a tax cut for the ultrawealthy and not for the middle class, and anyone who tries to deceive you into thinking otherwise, shame on them.

Adding insult to injury, this tax cut adds \$1.5 trillion to the national debt, and Republicans will soon use the debt to justify their ultimate plan, which is to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Today's vote proves that Republicans care more about the wealthy and big multinational corporations than they do for ordinary people.

Merry Christmas to the wealthy, who already have plenty, and to their special interest lobbyists. And to the rest of America struggling to make ends meet, bah humbug.

THE CORKER KICKBACK

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as Republicans rammed through their tax gravy train for billionaires, we learned of another carve-out to megainvestors in real estate.

This carve-out allows real estate businesses to take advantage of a new tax break, which was parachuted into the Senate bill to swing Republican votes, like Senator BOB CORKER.

Drain the swamp?

The Republicans are laughing all the way to the bank.